Polit. Pamph. vol 142.

COPIES

OF THE

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

GENERAL MEETINGS

OF THE

COUNTY of WILTS,

AND LIKEWISE

COPIES

OF THE

Proceedings and Correſpondence

OF THE

COMMITTEE

Appointed at the

General Meeting of the COUNTY,

Held 26th *January*, 1780.

Publiſhed by Order of the COMMITTEE.

SALISBURY:

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M.DCC.LXXX.

Copies of Proceedings, &c.

To the Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, and others, Freeholders of the County of WILTS.

AT the unanimous Requeſt of the Gentlemen aſſembled at the General Quarter Seſſions for this County, this Day holden in this City, ſignified to me by their Chairman, the Rev. Dr. WAKE,—I hereby give Notice, that a Meeting of the County will be holden at the Devizes on Wedneſday the 26th Inſtant, at Eleven o'Clock in the Forenoon, to conſider of the preſent Situation of public Affairs; and I do earneſtly entreat you to give an early and numerous Attendance.

ROBERT COOPER, Sheriff.

Sarum, 11th January, 1780.

DEVIZES, *26th Jan.* 1780.

AT a very numerous and reſpectable Meeting of the Nobility, Gentlemen, Clergy, and Freeholders of the County of Wilts, held here this Day, for conſidering of the preſent Situation of public Affairs,

ROBERT COOPER, Eſq. the High Sheriff, in the Chair;

The following Petition was read, viz.

To the Honorable the Commons of Great Britain in Parliament aſſembled,

The Petition of the High Sheriff, Nobility, Gentlemen, Clergy, and Freeholders of the County of WILTS,

Sheweth,

THAT this Nation hath been engaged for ſeveral Years in a moſt expenſive and unfortunate War; that many of our valuable Colonies, having actually declared themſelves independent, have formed a ſtrict Confederacy with France and Spain, the dangerous and inveterate Enemies of Great Britain; that the Conſequence of thoſe combined

bined Misfortunes hath been a large Addition to the national Debt, a heavy Accumulation of Taxes, a rapid Decline of the Trade, Manufactures, and Land Rents of the Kingdom.

Alarmed at the diminiſhed Reſources and growing Burthens of this Country, and convinced that rigid Frugality is now indiſpenſably neceſſary in every Department of the State, your Petitioners obſerve with Grief, that notwithſtanding the calamitous and impoveriſhed Condition of the Nation, much public Money has been improvidently ſquandered, and that many Individuals enjoy ſinecure Places, efficient Places with exorbitant Emoluments, and Penſions unmerited by public Service, to a large and ſtill increaſing Amount; whence the Crown has acquired a great and unconſtitutional Influence, which if not checked, may ſoon prove fatal to the Liberties of this Country.

Your Petitioners conceiving that the true End of every legitimate Government is not the Emolument of any Individual, but the Welfare of the Community, and conſidering that by the Conſtitution of this Realm, the national Purſe is entruſted in a peculiar Manner to the Cuſtody of this Honorable Houſe, beg Leave further to repreſent, that until

effectual Measures be taken to redress the oppressive Grievances herein stated, the Grant of an additional Sum of public Money, beyond the Produce of the present Taxes, will be injurious to the Rights and Property of the People, and derogatory from the Honor and Dignity of Parliament.

Your Petitioners therefore, appealing to the Justice of this Honorable House, do most earnestly request, that before any new Burthens are laid upon this Country, effectual Measures may be taken by this House to enquire into and correct the gross Abuses in the Expenditure of public Money, to reduce all exorbitant Emoluments, to rescind and abolish all sinecure Places and unmerited Pensions, and to appropriate the Produce to the Necessities of the State, in such Manner as to the Wisdom of Parliament shall seem meet.

And your Petitioners shall ever pray, &c.

After which the following Resolutions were agreed on, viz.

1st. RESOLVED, That the Petition now read to this Meeting, addressed to the House of Commons, and requesting that before any new Burthens be laid upon the Country, effectual Measures

ſures may be taken by that Houſe to enquire into and correct the groſs Abuſes in the Expenditure of public Money, to reduce all exorbitant Emoluments, to reſcind and aboliſh all ſinecure Places and unmerited Penſions, and to appropriate the Produce to the Neceſſities of the State, is approved by this Meeting.

2d. RESOLVED, That a Committee of 51 Gentlemen be appointed to carry on the neceſſary Correſpondence for effectually promoting the Object of the Petition, and to prepare a Plan of an Aſſociation, on legal and conſtitutional Grounds, to ſupport that laudable Reform, and to take ſuch other Meaſures as may conduce to reſtore the Freedom of Parliament; and the following Noblemen and Gentlemen are accordingly appointed the ſaid Committee:

Earl of Abingdon.
Earl of Radnor.
Earl of Shelburne.
Robert Cooper, Eſq. High Sheriff of Wilts.
Henry Penruddock Wyndham, Eſq. of Saliſbury.
Peter Bathurſt, Eſq. of Clarendon Park.
William Bowles, Eſq. of Heale.
Cha. Penruddocke, Eſq. of Compton Chamberlain.

Ambroſe Goddard, Eſq. of Swindon.
Richard Smith, Eſq. of Chilton Foliatt.
Richard Southby, Eſq. of Bulford.
William Huſſey, Eſq. of Saliſbury.
Hon. William Henry Bouverie.
Sir William Jones, Bart. of Ramſbury.
Rev. Mr. Townſend, of Pewſey.
John Awdry, Eſq. of Notton.
Rev. Dr. Warneford, of Sevenhampton.
William Pierce Aſhe A'Court, Eſq. of Saliſbury.
The Rev. Dr. Harrington, of Saliſbury.
Henry Dawkins, Eſq. of Standlinch.
Lovelace Bigg, Eſq. of Chilton.
Edward Poore, jun. Eſq. of Tidworth.
Samuel Cam, Eſq. of Bradford.
Thomas Bytheſea, Eſq. of Wick-Houſe.
William Northey, Eſq. of Lockeridge.
Richard Atwood, Eſq. of Bradford.
The Hon. Charles James Fox.
Henry Eyre, Eſq. of Brickworth.
Rev. Mr. John Bowle, of Idmiſton.
Edward Poore, Eſq. of Wedhampton.
Thomas Vilett, Eſq. of Swindon.
Thomas Calley, Eſq. of Burdrop.
Triſtram Huddleſtone Jervoiſe, Eſq. of Britford.
James Montagu, jun. Eſq. of Lackham.
Rev. Mr. Pocock, of Mildenhall.

William Talk, Eſq. of Saliſbury.
Robert Aſhe, Eſq. of Langley Burrell.
Edward Horlock Mortimer, Eſq. of Trowbridge.
The Rev. Dr. Kent, of Potterne.
John Yerbury, Eſq. of Bradford.
Matthew Humphrys, Eſq. of Chippenham.
William Harding, Eſq. of Swindon.
Eſmead Edridge, Eſq. of Chippenham.
John Reeve Edridge, Eſq. of Chippenham.
Richard Long, Eſq. of Rowde Aſhton.
Gaisford Gibbs, Eſq. of Weſtbury.
Thomas Liddiard, Eſq. of Devizes.
Rev. Mr. Polhill, of Milſtone.
James Sutton, Eſq. of Devizes.
Thomas Goddard Vilett, Eſq. of Swindon.
William Dyke, Eſq. of Siſencott.

3d. RESOLVED, That the ſaid Committee do meet immediately at the Black Bear Inn, in Devizes, and that any ſeven or more of them do conſtitute a Quorum of the ſaid Committee, and that they adjourn as they think proper, and that their Proceedings be preſented to this Meeting, to be held by Adjournment on Tueſday in Eaſter Week next enſuing.

4th. RE-

4th. RESOLVED, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the High Sheriff for his Readineſs in calling this Meeting, and for his polite and impartial Conduct at it.

5th. RESOLVED, That this Meeting do adjourn to Tueſday in Eaſter Week next enſuing, at Devizes.

ROBERT COOPER, Chairman.

AT

AT a Meeting of the Committee appointed at the General Meeting of the Nobility, Gentlemen, Clergy and Freeholders of the County of Wilts, for the Purpoſe of carrying on the neceſſary Correſpondence for promoting the Object of the Petition agreed to be preſented to the Houſe of Commons, and for other Purpoſes, held at the Black Bear Inn, in Devizes, 26th January, 1780;

PRESENT,

ROBERT COOPER, Eſq. in the Chair.

Earl of Radnor
Earl of Shelburne
Henry Penruddock Wyndham, Eſq.
William Bowles, Eſq.
Charles Penruddocke, Eſq.
Ambroſe Goddard, Eſq.
Richard Smith, Eſq.
Richard Southby, Eſq.
William Huſſey, Eſq.
Hon. William Henry Bouverie
Sir William Jones, Bart.
Rev. Mr. Townſend
John Awdry, Eſq.
Rev. Dr. Warneford
William Pierce Aſhe A'Court, Eſq:
The Rev. Dr. Harrington
Henry Dawkins, Eſq.
Edward Poore, jun. Eſq.
Thomas Bytheſea, Eſq.
William Northey, Eſq.
Hon. Charles James Fox Henry

Henry Eyre, Eſq.
Edward Poore, of Wedhampton, Eſq.
Thomas Calley, Eſq.
Triſtram Huddleſtone Jervoiſe, Eſq.
Rev. Mr. Pocock
William Talk, Eſq.
Robert Aſhe, Eſq.
Edward Horlock Mortimer, Eſq.
The Rev. Dr. Kent
John Yerbury, Eſq.
Matthew Humphrys, Eſq.
William Harding, Eſq.
Eſmead Edridge, Eſq.
John Reeve Edridge, Eſq.
The Rev. Mr. Polhill
James Sutton, Eſq.
Thomas Goddard Vilett, Eſq.
William Dyke, Eſq.

Mr. WILLIAM SALMON is appointed Clerk or Secretary to this Committee.

RESOLVED, That fair Copies be made of the Petition on Parchment, and that the ſame be ſent to the ſeveral Market Towns in this County, and alſo to Free Maſons Tavern in London, under the Direction of Mr. Salmon, to be ſigned by the Freeholders.

RESOLVED, That Public Notice be given by the Clerk of ſuch Petition being ſo ſent, and where the ſame is depoſited, and that the ſame will continue at each Place for the Space of three Days.

RESOLVED,

RESOLVED, That the Petition, when ſigned, be tranſmitted to the County Members, to be by them preſented to the Houſe of Commons.

RESOLVED, That the Clerk of this Committee do write to the ſeveral Repreſentatives in Parliament for the City and Boroughs within this County, requeſting them to give their Support to the Petition in the Houſe of Commons.

RESOLVED, That the Clerk do correſpond with ſuch other Committees as are or ſhall be appointed for ſimilar Purpoſes with the preſent, to propoſe on the Part of this Committee, and to requeſt on their Parts, a free Communication of Proceedings.

RESOLVED, That the Clerk do receive the Directions of Mr. Awdry, or, in his Abſence, of Mr. Northey, concerning the Time of the next Meeting of this Committee; and that a Meeting be held at ſuch Time and Place as Mr. Awdry or Mr. Northey ſhall appoint (of which public Notice to be given).

RESOLVED,

RESOLVED, That the ſeveral Members of this Committee of either Houſe of Parliament, who ſhall be in London, be requeſted to form themſelves into a Committee there, to correſpond with Mr. Awdry, or Mr. Northey, on the Subject of the Petition.

ROBERT COOPER, Chairman.

The

The two following Letters from the Hon. Charles James Fox to John Awdry, Eſq. Chairman of the Committee, were received ſubſequent to the laſt Meeting, and were produced and read at the following.

(I.)

SIR,

BY Order of the Weſtminſter Committee, I have the Honor of tranſmitting to you the incloſed Reſolution.

The Words of Lord Hillſborough alluded to, could not be accurately taken down, but the Subſtance of them, as related to us by moſt reſpectable Peers who were preſent, was calling the Petitions and Petitioners factious, and inſinuating that the Promoters of the Committees meant to excite Inſurrection and Rebellion.

I have the Honor to be,
SIR,
Your moſt obedient, and
moſt humble Servant,
C. J. FOX,
Chairman of the Weſtminſter Committee.

St. James's Street, Feb. 11, 1780.

The Reſolution incloſed in the foregoing Letter.

WESTMINSTER COMMITTEE.

King's-Arms Tavern, Palace-Yard, Feb. 9, 1780.

IT having been ſtated and aſcertained to the Committee, that the Earl of Hillſborough, one of his Majeſty's principal Secretaries of State, did, in a Debate on the Motion of Lord Shelburne, in the Houſe of Peers, on Tueſday the 8th Day of February, 1780, miſrepreſent and traduce the Motives of thoſe who have concurred in the Appointment of Committees for the Purpoſe of promoting the Objects of the Petitions:

RESOLVED, That any Attempt to miſrepreſent the legal, conſtitutional, and peaceable Efforts of this and other Committees appointed by the People of England, for promoting the juſt Objects of their Petitions, is a groſs and unmerited Inſult on the Proceedings and Intentions of the Committees and Petitioners in general; and, by aſcribing the worſt Motives, unſupported by Proof, to all thoſe who have concurred in the ſaid Meaſures, manifeſtly tends to ſpread Diſſention and domeſtic Enmity throughout the Kingdom.

C. J. FOX, Chairman.

(II.)

SIR,

IN Compliance with the Prayer of the ſeveral Petitions, Sir George Savile yeſterday moved for a Liſt of the Penſions. Lord North moved an Amendment, to confine the Motion ſolely to ſuch Penſions as are paid at the Exchequer, which make a very trifling Part of the enormous Liſt. The Houſe, after a long Debate, divided, and there appeared for Lord North's Amendment 188, againſt it 186; ſo that this important Queſtion was loſt only by two Votes. Sir George Savile, Mr. Dunning, Mr. Townſhend, Mr. Burke, Colonel Barré, and ſome other Gentlemen, exerted themſelves with great Ability upon the Occaſion; but the great and uncommon Diviſion againſt the Miniſter muſt be attributed to the Spirit which has appeared in the People at large. If ſuch are the Effects of your Exertions, even in the firſt Inſtance, I need not ſay how ſure you are of Succeſs, if you perſevere with Steadineſs in what you have begun with ſo much Propriety.

I am, Sir, with great Reſpect,

Your moſt obedient and moſt humble Servant,

C. J. FOX,

Chairman of the Weſtminſter Committee.

St. James's-Street, Feb. 22, 1780.

AT a Meeting of the Committee at the King's Arms Inn, in Devizes, on Friday the 25th of February, 1780, agreeable to an Advertiſement by John Awdry, Eſq. for that Purpoſe;

PRESENT,

JOHN AWDRY, Eſq. in the Chair.

Rev. Mr. Townſend	John Reeve Edridge, Eſq.
Samuel Cam, Eſq.	Gaisford Gibbs, Eſq.
Richard Atwood, Eſq.	Thomas Liddiard, Eſq.
Thomas Calley, Eſq.	Rev. Mr. Polhill
James Montagu, jun. Eſq.	James Sutton, Eſq.
Rev. Dr. Kent	William Dyke, Eſq.
John Yerbury, Eſq.	

1ſt. At this Meeting the Secretary reported, that, agreeable to the Directions of the Committee of the 26th of January laſt, he had wrote to the ſeveral Repreſentatives in Parliament for the City and Boroughs within this County, requeſting their Support to the Petition; and that he had received the following Anſwers, which were read, and ordered to be entered among the Proceedings of this Committee, viz.

To

To Mr. SALMON.

Groſvenor-Place, 5th Feb. 1780.

SIR,

I Am favored with your Letter, conveying to me the Reſolution of the Gentlemen of the Committee. I have had the Honor to ſit many Years as an independent Member in Parliament, where, I truſt, my Conduct has been conſiſtent with that Character, and which will continue to be guided by the ſame Rules it has hitherto been. I have the Honor to be, with the utmoſt Reſpect to the Gentlemen of the Committee,

SIR,

Your moſt obedient, and
faithful humble Servant,
JAMES TYLNEY LONG.

To Mr. SALMON.

Margaret-Street, Feb. 7, 1780.

SIR,

BEING a Member of the Committee appointed to promote the Prayer of the Wiltſhire Petition, and having ſigned the ſame, it is needleſs for me to ſay, that I ſhall give it my hearty Concurrence and Support in Parliament.

I am, SIR,

Your obedient humble Servant,
W. H. BOUVERIE.

To Mr. SALMON.

London, Feb. 7, 1780.

SIR,

I Have received your Letter, written by Order of the Gentlemen of the Committee of the County of Wilts, requeſting my Support to a Petition to be preſented to the Houſe of Commons from the ſaid County. I beg the Favor of you to inform the Committee, that I feel myſelf equally impelled by Inclination and Duty to give my Attendance in every Stage of that Buſineſs, and to contribute every Aſſiſtance in my Power to render it effectual. A Meaſure ſo evidently calculated to relieve the Diſtreſſes of the People, and to bring back, in ſome Meaſure, this Conſtitution to its original Spirit and Purity, will, I hope, meet with little Oppoſition. Should, however, the Friends and Promoters of it be diſappointed in the Event, this Advantage will certainly attend it, that it will ſerve to point out, and diſtinguiſh to the whole World, the real, diſintereſted Well-wiſhers to this Country and Conſtitution, from thoſe who are willing to ſubmit to every Abuſe and Negligence, and to ſupport the moſt deſtructive Meaſures, from the mean and unworthy

worthy Motives of perſonal Gratification and Emolument.

I have the Honor to be,

SIR,

Your moſt obedient humble Servant,

ROBERT SCOTT.

To Mr. SALMON.

Oxford-Street, Feb. 8, 1780.

SIR,

I Have received the Favor of your Letter, communicating to me the Reſolution paſſed by a Committee, appointed at a General Meeting of the Gentlemen, Clergy and Freeholders of the County of Wilts, at Devizes, on the 26th of January laſt, "requeſting my Support to their Petition, as one of the Repreſentatives of a Borough in that County."

It is a Matter of real Regret to me, that my infirm State of Health neceſſarily prevented me from attending at that Meeting, to have expreſſed my hearty Concurrence in the Reſolutions that were that Day taken, and my thorough Approbation of a Plan which will do Honor to every County that has adopted it, and which I ſincerely wiſh may be as univerſal as the Object is intereſting to every Individual in the Kingdom.

I beg you to aſſure the Gentlemen of the Committee, that nothing but Inability can prevent my Attendance in Parliament, upon an Occaſion to which I am ſo ſtrongly urg'd by my Opinion, my Duty, and my Inclination.

It is from the legal and conſtitutional Exertions alone of the independent Gentlemen without Doors that we can ſtill entertain a Hope at this alarming Criſis. An obſtinate Perſeverance in bad Government, and unfortunate Meaſures, conducted with a Profuſion of Public Money beyond all Example, but uniformly ſupported through its Progreſs by a decided Majority in both Houſes, point out too plainly to the World the Cauſe and the Effect; which, whilſt they have rendered fruitleſs and almoſt ridiculous every Effort that has been attempted to avert the Ruin of the Country, have driven us at Length to the Brink of the Precipice.

The immenſe Addition to the Public Debt, which has purchaſed to us nothing but Diſgraces and Misfortunes, has entailed a permanent Burthen upon us and our Poſterity on the one Hand, whilſt ſo many Sources of our Wealth and National Strength on the other have been for ever loſt to Great Britain; a wanton Sacrifice to the Negligence and Incapacity of the Miniſters! Theſe are Evils

which

which it is already too late to remedy, as to what is paſt; but if any Thing can prevent the rapid Advances of them, which threaten not only our Liberties as a free People, but our very Exiſtence as an independent State; if any Thing can ſecure to us what remains of the Britiſh Empire, and ſave us from the Calamities at Home and Abroad, which ſo deſperate a Syſtem muſt infallibly involve us in; it is the timely Interpoſition of an honeſt and independent Spirit, that ſhall pledge itſelf to correct Abuſes, to check the undue Influence of the Crown, to purge away that Corruption which overwhelms us; equally anxious at the ſame Time to protect and keep inviolate our happy Conſtitution, to watch over the Peace and Safety of the Country, and to reſtore that Energy to Government which nothing can give but a Confidence in the Legiſlature.

That ſuch a well-directed, firm, and temperate Spirit may prevail over all the Artifices that probably will be oppoſed to it, and that any Regulations whatever which may beſt conduce to the reſtoring the Freedom of Parliament, may take Effect to the eſtabliſhing the Conſtitution upon its ancient Principles of Independence, is the ſincere and ardent Wiſh of, SIR,

Your moſt obedient humble Servant,

THOMAS PITT.

To Mr. SALMON.

London, Feb. 21, 1780.

SIR,

I Acknowledge the Receipt of your obliging Letter of the 31ſt of January, communicating the Reſolution of the Committee of the County of Wilts, which directs you to requeſt the Repreſentatives of the City and Boroughs to ſupport the Petition which they intend to preſent to the Houſe of Commons. I beg you will aſſure that very reſpectable Body, that I am happy in entertaining Opinions ſo perfectly conſonant to thoſe which they have declared, and that I ſhall take every Opportunity of ſhewing my Reſpect and Attachment to ſo independent a County.

I have the Honor to be, SIR,
Your moſt obedient, and
moſt humble Servant,
J. BARRÉ.

2d. RESOLVED unanimouſly, that the Thanks of this Committee be tranſmitted by the Secretary to the Honorable William Henry Bouverie, Robert Scott, Eſq. Thomas Pitt, Eſq. and the Right

Right Honorable Iſaac Barré, for the Anſwers they have given to the Secretary's Letter, requeſting their Support to the Petition.

3d. The Chairman having reported, that he had received Information from Mr. Penruddocke, that the Petition from this County was preſented to the Houſe of Commons on the 11th Inſtant;—ORDERED, That the Thanks of this Committee be tranſmitted by the Secretary to Mr. Penruddocke and Mr. Goddard, for their Readineſs in preſenting the ſame.

4th. Mr. Cooper, the Chairman at the General Meeting, having tranſmitted to this Committee the following Letter from the Chairman of the York Committee, and the ſame being read;—ORDERED, That it be entered among the Proceedings.

To ROBERT COOPER, Eſq.

York Tavern, Feb. 3, 1780.

SIR,

THE Sub-Committee, appointed by the Committee of 61 to anſwer Letters, under certain Reſtrictions and Regulations, do inform you, they are directed by the ſaid Committee, to aſſure

aſſure you, they cannot help obſerving, with great Satisfaction, that the County of Wilts has not only adopted the Meaſures reſolved upon at the Yorkſhire Meeting, but alſo the very Terms of their Petition. They beg Leave to expreſs their very high Senſe of the Honor done them by this Reſolution, and to declare their Opinion of the good Effects which may flow from a Conformity of Sentiment and Language, upon theſe great conſtitutional Queſtions, in the ſeveral Applications made to Parliament, by the Counties and Corporations of this Kingdom.

The Committee have further directed me to acquaint you, that they ſhall be happy to enter into a Correſpondence with the Committee of the County of Wilts, and to receive the Communication of their Ideas on the great National Object we are jointly engaged in. The Petition of the County of York will be in Town on Saturday the 5th Inſtant, and it is ſuppoſed will be preſented on the Monday following. I have the Honor to be, with the greateſt Reſpect,

SIR,

Your moſt obedient Servant,

STEPHEN CROFTS,

Chairman for this Day.

5th. The Chairman produced to this Committee Letters, which he received from the Chairman of the Weſtminſter Committee, and from Mr. Rix, the Town Clerk of the City of London, which being read, are alſo ordered to be entered among the Proceedings.

SIR,

IN Obedience to an Order of the Weſtminſter Committee, I have the Honor of tranſmitting to you a Copy of the Proceedings of the Meeting of the City and Liberties of Weſtminſter, held in Weſtminſter Hall, on Wedneſday the 2d Inſtant; as alſo a Copy of certain Reſolutions of the Weſtminſter Committee, met at the King's-Arms Tavern, Palace-Yard, on the ſame Day.

By the laſt of theſe Reſolutions, you will perceive how deſirous the Committee are of acting in Concert with all other Committees, appointed for Purpoſes ſimilar to thoſe for which they are themſelves inſtituted.

You will give me Leave to obſerve, that if Unanimity was a deſirable Object in the Petitions themſelves, it becomes much more neceſſary in the Formation of thoſe Plans of Aſſociation, which the

ſeveral

ſeveral Committees have been directed to prepare, and lay before the adjourned Meeting of their reſpective Counties and Cities, and that nothing is ſo likely to produce ſuch an Unanimity as a free and unreſerved Communication of Sentiments, either by Letter or Conference, or both, among thoſe who wiſh to promote the Objects of the Petitions. I have the Honor to be, with the greateſt Reſpect,

SIR,

Your moſt obedient, and
moſt humble Servant,
C. J. FOX,
Chairman of the Weſtminſter Committee.

St. James's Street, Feb. 9, 1780.

Guildhall, Feb. 19, 1780.

SIR,

THE Committee appointed by the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Commons, of the City of London, in Common Council aſſembled, for the Purpoſe of co-operating with the ſeveral Committees of the Kingdom, having the ſame Views with themſelves, have directed me to ſignify to you their entire Coincidence in Sentiment with the very reſpectable County of York, as to their primary Objects,

a Reform in the Public Expenditure, and the Decreaſe of the undue Influence of the Crown.

I am alſo to inform you, that this Committee will, at all Times, be ready to concur with the ſeveral Committees appointed to conſider of a Plan of National Aſſociation in every legal and conſtitutional Meaſure, to obtain thoſe Public Benefits; and to aſſure you, they are neither hurt nor awed by the ſcurrilous and criminal Language of thoſe Enemies of the Conſtitution, who have yet to learn the Reſpect which they owe to the People of England.

I have the Honor to ſign myſelf, by Order of the Committee,

SIR,

Your moſt obedient humble Servant,

WILLIAM RIX.

6th. RESOLVED unanimouſly, that the Chairman of this Committee be requeſted to write to the Chairman or Secretary of the ſeveral Committees of York, London, and Weſtminſter, to requeſt that they will communicate to this Committee, their Ideas of a Plan of an Aſſociation, on legal and conſtitutional Grounds.

7th.

7th. RESOLVED unanimouſly, that the Thanks of this Committee be given to Lord Shelburne, for his Motion in the Houſe of Peers on the 8th of February inſtant, and that this Reſolution be communicated to him by the Chairman.

8th. RESOLVED unanimouſly, that the Thanks of this Committee be given to Edmund Burke, Eſq. for the very ſalutary and meritorious Plan ſubmitted by him to the Houſe of Commons on the 11th of February.

9th. RESOLVED unanimouſly, that the Thanks of this Committee be given to Sir George Savile, Bart. for the Motions made by him in the Houſe of Commons on the 15th of February.

10th. RESOLVED unanimouſly, that it is the Opinion of this Committee, that the People have an undoubted Right to be fully informed of the Expenditure of the Public Money.

11th. RESOLVED unanimouſly, that any Attempt to miſrepreſent the legal, conſtitutional, and peaceable Efforts of this and other Committees, appointed by the People of England, for promoting the juſt Objects of their Petitions, is a groſs and unmerited Inſult on the Proceedings

and

and Intentions of the Committees and Petitioners in general; and by aſcribing the worſt Motives, unſupported by Proof, to all thoſe who have concurred in the ſaid Meaſures, manifeſtly tends to ſpread Diſſention and domeſtic Enmity throughout the Kingdom.

12th. RESOLVED, That the 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, and 11th Reſolutions of this Committee, be publiſhed once in the St. James's Chronicle, and the Saliſbury Journal, and Bath Chronicle.

13th. RESOLVED, That this Committee do adjourn, and the ſame is accordingly adjourned to Tueſday the 21ſt of March next, at the King's Arms Inn, in Devizes.

J. AWDRY, Chairman.

The

The two following Letters were received by the Chairman of the Committee, ſubſequent to the laſt Meeting.

To J. AWDRY, Eſq.

Charles-Street, St. James's Square,
SIR, *Feb.* 28, 1780.

I Am honored with your Letter of the 25th Inſtant, together with the Reſolution of the Wiltſhire Committee, by which they are pleaſed to thank me for the Plan which I ſubmitted to the Houſe of Commons on the Eleventh of this Month.

I receive this Teſtimony of their Approbation with much Gratitude; and I beg of you, Sir, to aſſure that reſpectable Body, that the ſound and conſtitutional Vigour of Government, the Honor and Independence of Parliament, and the general Good of the People, were the ſole Objects of my Attention, and my ultimate View in forming and digeſting the Propoſals which I offered to the Wiſdom of the Repreſentatives of the Nation. I am very happy to find that what I had meditated as my Duty, as one of thoſe Repreſentatives, and engaged myſelf to produce to Parliament, proved the expreſſed

expreſſed Senſe, and formal Deſires of the People in the ſeveral Petitions which have been ſince preſented.

The Approbation of my fellow Subjects is the moſt honorable, as it is abundant Reward for my humble Endeavours in their Service; but to carry theſe, and the Meaſures of much wiſer Men into Execution, for the Benefit of the State and People, the confidential and effectual Support of that People is indiſpenſably neceſſary. Their unceaſing Attention to their own Intereſts is the beſt, if not the only Mode by which the Wiſdom of the public Councils can be brought to forward them in Earneſt. A temperate, conſiderate, and, at the ſame Time, zealous Perſeverance in the conſtitutional Meaſures lately adopted, muſt, I think ſincerely, obtain for them, in the End, the Completion of their very juſt and very reaſonable Deſires.

I have the Honor to be, SIR,

Your moſt obedient, and

moſt humble Servant,

EDMUND BURKE.

To JOHN AWDRY, Eſq.

London, March 1, 1780.

SIR,

I AM honored with your Letter incloſing the Reſolution of the Committee. I beg you'll aſſure the Committee, that I am particularly happy in this Mark of Approbation, from a County where I principally reſide, and whoſe good Opinion I ſhall ever wiſh to cultivate upon the moſt diſintereſted Principles.

I have the Honor to be,

With great Regard,

SIR,

Your moſt obedient humble Servant,

SHELBURNE.

WILT-

WILTSHIRE COMMITTEE.

AT a Special Meeting of this Committee, held agreeable to public Advertiſement, at the Three Lions Inn, in Sarum, on Wedneſday the 8th Day of March, 1780;

PRESENT,

JOHN AWDRY, Eſq. in the Chair.

Robert Cooper, Eſq.
Henry Penruddock Wyndham, Eſq.
Peter Bathurſt, Eſq.
Richard Southby, Eſq.
William Pierce Aſhe A'Court, Eſq.
The Rev. Dr. Harrington.
Edward Poore, Jun. Eſq. of Tidworth.
The Rev. Mr. John Bowle.
William Talk, Eſq.
The Rev. Dr. Kent.
The Rev. Mr. Polhill.
William Dyke, Eſq.
The Rev. Mr. Townſend.

The Chairman having produced to this Committee a Letter which he received from Mr. Wyvill, Chairman of the York Committee, incloſing the Requeſt therein mentioned;—ORDERED, That the ſaid Letter and Requeſt be now entered among the Proceedings of this Committee.

To JOHN AWDRY, Esq.

SIR, *Albemarle-Street*, 1780.

I TAKE the Liberty to transmit to you the inclosed Request, signed by six Chairmen of different petitioning Counties who happen to be now in Town, which you will be pleased to lay before your Committee of the County of Wilts.

I am, Sir, with great Respect,
Your most obedient Servant,
C. WYVILL.

(The Request inclosed in the foregoing Letter.)

St. Alban's Tavern, Feb. 28, 1780.

A General Union of those Men who have approved of the Measure of petitioning Parliament for a Reform of the gross Abuses in the Expenditure of Public Money, being essentially necessary in the present Situation of public Affairs, the Committee of the County of Wilts is earnestly requested to depute one, two, or three Members of their Committee to meet at the St. Alban's Tavern, on Saturday the 11th Day of March, at Twelve o'Clock, to confer with Members of other Committees, upon the most effectual Mode of supporting the Objects of their Petition on legal and consti-

conſtitutional Grounds, and of reſtoring the due Freedom of Parliament; in order to form, and to report to their Committee, ſuch Plans of public and conſtitutional Reform as ſhall meet with the general Approbation of the Members deputed from ſuch Committees.

C. WYVILL.
D. PARRY.
G. JENNINGS.
FRA. VINCENT.
G. O. PAUL.
W. FRANKLAND.

It is recommended to each Committee by the under-written Gentlemen, Members of the Yorkſhire Committee, as being, in their Judgment, a proper and adviſeable Meaſure to appoint ſuch Gentlemen only to be Deputies who are not Members of either Houſe of Parliament.

C. WYVILL,
Chairman of the Committee of Yorkſhire.

ROBERT HILDYARD,
W. MASON,
Members of the Committee of Yorkſhire.

On conſidering the above Requeſt,—RESOLVED, That the Chairman be deſired to ſend the following Letter to the Chairman of the Yorkſhire Committee.

SIR,

I AM honored with your Letter on the Subject of appointing Deputies to meet at the St. Alban's Tavern. I have in Conſequence of it called a Committee of this County, and am deſired to tranſmit to you their Senſe of the Honor of your Letter, and their entire Union in their Wiſhes to promote the Objects of their Petition. And, moreover, to acquaint you, that they have thought it expedient to refer the Subject of your Letter to a more mature and ample Diſcuſſion in a Meeting of the County at large, and which they think the Importance of the Meaſure abſolutely requires.

I have the Honour to be,

SIR,

Your moſt obedient humble Servant,

J. AWDRY.

P. S. You will be pleaſed, Sir, to communicate the above to the Chairmen of the reſpective Committees who have ſigned the Requeſt.

J. AWDRY, Chairman.

WILT-

WILTSHIRE COMMITTEE.

AT a Meeting of the Committee held by Adjournment at the King's Arms Inn, in Devizes, on Tueſday the 21ſt Day of March, 1780;

PRESENT,

JOHN AWDRY, Eſq. in the Chair.

Richard Southby, Eſq.	Rev. Mr. Polhill.
Rev. Mr. Townſend.	James Sutton, Eſq.
Edward Poore, Jun. Eſq. of Tidworth.	William Dyke, Eſq.
John Yerbury, Eſq.	Thomas Calley, Eſq.

At this Committee the Secretary produced Letters which he had received from John Dunning, Eſq. and Pinckney Wilkinſon, Eſq. both which are ordered to be entered among the Proceedings of this Committee, viz.

To Mr. SALMON.

Lincoln's-Inn, March 5, 1780.

SIR,

I Received your Favor in the due Courſe of the Poſt, acquainting me that at a General Meeting of the Nobility, Gentlemen, Clergy, and Free-

holders of the County of Wilts, a Petition had been agreed on reſpecting very important public Objects, and a Committee appointed to conduct and ſupport it, who had directed you as their Clerk to write to the ſeveral Repreſentatives in Parliament for the City and Boroughs within the County, requeſting them to ſupport the Petition in the Houſe of Commons, and I am to deſire that you will convey my reſpectful Compliments to the Gentlemen of that Committee, with an Aſſurance of my cordial Concurrence in the Sentiments expreſſed in the Petition, and that no Effort on my Part ſhall be wanting to ſupport and promote the Objects of it; thinking, as I do, that it leads to the beſt, if not the only Means of reſcuing our unhappy Country from the Ruin it is threatened with; and that adopted and ſupported as it has been, and I truſt will be, by what there is of public Virtue and public Spirit throughout the Kingdom, the Meaſure will force the Attention it deſerves, and get the better of the intereſted Oppoſition it has to encounter. I ought to apologize to the Committee for being ſo late in my Acknowledgment of the Honor of their Commands, which I truſt they will do me the Juſtice to believe has not proceeded from Inattention to them, but from a Variety of Avocations which have prevented me

from

from giving you this Trouble ſo early as I wiſhed to have done.

I am, SIR,
Your very humble Servant,
J. DUNNING.

To Mr. SALMON.

SIR,

YOUR Letter of 31ſt January was ſent me to my Houſe in Norfolk, where I then was, giving me an Acocunt of the County Meeting at the Devizes.

I beg the Favor of you to aſſure the Gentlemen of the Committee there choſen, that no Man is more firmly with them in Opinion and Inclination than I am. Having read the Hiſtory of Philip the Second of Spain and the Low Countries, as well as Marſhall's Memoirs upon the Art of War, I was fully perſuaded what would be the Event of the American War; and I had this very Morning an Officer with me who has been in a great Part of North America, and in ſeveral Engagements, who aſſured me that we have not the leaſt Proſpect of ſubduing that Country; yet the Miniſtry are ſtill bent upon carrying on the War, though viſibly to the Deſtruction of this Country.

Before

Before I received your Letter, I was choſen one of the Committee at Norwich, ſo that I am doubly bound to ſupport the County Petitions, and I ſhall not fail to do it to the utmoſt of my Power. I have ſince I came to Town attended the Houſe of Commons upon all great Queſtions, though you may not always ſee my Name in the Papers, becauſe when I ſee the Houſe will ſit very late, I ſometimes *pair off*, as they call it, that is, I come away with a Miniſterial Member, as I did laſt Night with Lord Nugent, which is the ſame as if we had both ſtaid and voted, as we uſually do on different Sides.

I ſhould have anſwered your Letter ſooner, but that I had a Pain in my Hand occaſioned by a Fall from my Horſe, ſo that I could not write without Difficulty. I am, SIR,

Your moſt obedient Servant,

PINCKNEY WILKINSON.

London, 17th March, 1780.

RESOLVED unanimouſly, that the Thanks of this Committee be tranſmitted by the Secretary to John Dunning, Eſq. and Pinckney Wilkinſon, Eſq. for the Anſwers they have given to the Secretary's Letter, requeſting their Support to the Petition.

RESOLVED,

RESOLVED, That the following Advertiſement be inſerted in the next Bath Chronicle and Saliſbury Journal.

WILTSHIRE COMMITTEE.

Devizes, 21ſt March, 1780.

THE Wiltſhire Committee beg Leave to inform the Freeholders of this County, and others, that the General Meeting of this County will be held, by Adjournment, on Tueſday the 28th Inſtant, at Devizes.

RESOLVED, That this Committee do adjourn, and the ſame is accordingly adjourned, to Monday the 27th of this Inſtant March, at the King's Arms Inn, in Devizes; of which Notice is ordered to be given to every Member of this Committee.

J. AWDRY, Chairman.

WILT-

WILTSHIRE COMMITTEE.

AT a Meeting of the Committee, held by Adjournment at the King's Arms Inn, in Devizes, on Monday the 27th Day of March, 1780;

PRESENT,

JOHN AWDRY, Eſq. in the Chair.

Earl of Radnor.
Robert Cooper, Eſq.
Henry Penruddock Wyndham, Eſq.
Peter Bathurſt, Eſq.
William Bowles, Eſq.
William Huſſey, Eſq.
Rev. Mr. Townſend
Rev. Dr. Warneford.
William Pierce Aſhe A'Court, Eſq.
The Rev. Dr. Harrington.
Edward Poore, Jun. Eſq.
Samuel Cam, Eſq.
Richard Atwood, Eſq.
Henry Eyre, Eſq.
Rev. Mr. John Bowle.
Thomas Calley, Eſq.
William Talk, Eſq.
Robert Aſhe, Eſq.
Matthew Humphrys, Eſq.
William Harding, Eſq.
John Reeve Edridge, Eſq.
Gaisford Gibbs, Eſq.
Rev. Mr. Polhill.
James Sutton, Eſq.
Thomas Goddard Vilett, Eſq.
William Dyke, Eſq.
John Yerbury, Eſq.
Richard Southby, Eſq.

At

At this Meeting a Letter from the Right Hon. the Earl of Radnor to the Chairman of this Committee, was produced and read, and the ſame is ordered to be entered among the Proceedings.

Grafton-Street, March 18, 1780.

SIR,

AS the Appointment of Deputies to meet in London has been much the Subject of Converſation, and to me appears to be much miſrepreſented by ſome, and miſunderſtood by many; I here trouble you with a few Lines, to ſtate my own Ideas on that Subject, and, I believe, thoſe of the Favourers of the Meaſure.

The Committees of the ſeveral Counties are appointed to promote the Objects of the Petitions.—The Petitions (with a few Exceptions) are levelled at the waſteful Expenditure of Public Money, and the unconſtitutional Influence thence ariſing to the Crown. The Petitions in general, as to the very Words and all, or nearly all, in Subſtance followed that of the County of York for many concurrent Reaſons, but the beſt and moſt forcible was becauſe Unanimity was a Proof of Strength.—Unanimity therefore I aſſume to be highly conducive to our Succeſs,

Succeſs, and conſequently moſt deſirable: if it be deſirable in the firſt Inſtance, it cannot be leſs ſo in the ſecond; and if any Hopes of Succeſs reſt upon the Efforts of the Committees, much muſt this Principle reſt upon theſe Committees adopting the ſame, or nearly the ſame Plans.

With this View the ſeveral Committees were invited to ſend three of their own Body to London to confer, to adviſe upon, and to digeſt a Plan, which, under their Sanction and Recommendation, might be ſubmitted to the ſeveral Committees at large, and when ſubmitted, have this Merit at leaſt, that it had already met with the only general Approbation it was capable of receiving, and that upon *it, as a Means of promoting the Objects of the Petitions*, the Kingdom might be as unanimous as upon the Petitions themſelves. But to confer upon the Deputies (which ſome Perſons have ſuppoſed) a Repreſentative Power obligatory upon the Committees, is as contrary to the Deſign of the Invitation, as it is inconſiſtent with every Principle of Prudence and Propriety, and beyond the Powers of the Committees to confer.

I underſtand the Line taken by this Committee, at their laſt Meeting, was, that their Appointment extended only to promoting the Objects of the Petition.

Petition. It certainly only did ſo; and if the Gentlemen in Town extend their Plan to other Matters, however proper they may be in themſelves, they preclude the Concurrence of our Committee, as indeed I believe of many more.

Your late Reſolution touching upon this Point, has met a very general Approbation, as I am confident all the Proceedings will, which looking ſteadily and firmly, yet look temperately at public Reform.

I have the Honor to be, SIR,

Your very obedient humble Servant,

RADNOR.

To the Chairman of the Wiltſhire Committee, at the Devizes.

RESOLVED unanimouſly, that the Thanks of this Committee be given to the Earl of Radnor, for his Letter to the Chairman, explaining his Lordſhip's Ideas of the ſeveral Powers to be veſted in Committees and Deputies of Committees.

At this Meeting the following Letter from the Right Honorable Charles James Fox to the Chairman, was produced and read, and ordered to be entered among the Proceedings.

St.

St. James's-Street, March 25, 1780.

SIR,

I AM extremely ſorry, that it will not be in my Power to attend the Wiltſhire Committee on Monday next; but I hope you will have the Goodneſs to make my Excuſe to them. I need make no Obſervation on the very great Effects the Petitions have already had upon Parliament. The Numbers who have divided in Support of them, Numbers ſometimes amounting to a Majority, are a clear and undeniable Proof, that when the People have the Spirit to ſhew themſelves, they never ſhew themſelves in vain.

It is always hazardous to riſk ones Credit upon future Events; but if temperate and ſimple Plans of Aſſociations are adopted, and thoſe Plans adhered to with Steadineſs in the ſeveral petitioning Counties and Cities, I think it next to impoſſible, that we ſhould not be able to rid ourſelves of that overbearing Influence of the Crown, which is in Effect the Cauſe of all the Grievances we lament. The Effects already produced by our Exertions, are almoſt incredible, when we conſider how viſionary any Man would have been eſteemed ſix Months ago, who had hoped to aboliſh, by a Vote of Parliament, any of the Places dependent upon the Civil Liſt; but

we

we muſt not forget, that the little we have carried, has been carried againſt every Effort of the Miniſters, who have ſtill the Power of the Country in their Hands, ſo that all Hopes of future Succeſs muſt depend ſolely upon the Exertions of the People. Nothing can be more apparent, than that the Servants of the Crown are united in a Determination to reſiſt all the Objects you have moſt at Heart —where they fail in Strength, they have Recourſe to Stratagem; but neither Violence nor Stratagem can defeat the Wiſhes of the People of England, if they will but perſevere in firm and temperate Meaſures for obtaining them.

I have the Honor to be,

SIR,

Your moſt obedient Servant,

C. J. FOX.

To John Awdry, Eſq. Chairman of the Wiltſhire Committee.

RESOLVED unanimouſly, that the Thanks of this Committee be given to the Honorable Charles James Fox, for his very polite Letter to the Chairman of the 25th Inſtant.

St. James's-Street, March 25, 1780.

SIR,

I AM extremely ſorry, that it will not be in my Power to attend the Wiltſhire Committee on Monday next; but I hope you will have the Goodneſs to make my Excuſe to them. I need make no Obſervation on the very great Effects the Petitions have already had upon Parliament. The Numbers who have divided in Support of them, Numbers ſometimes amounting to a Majority, are a clear and undeniable Proof, that when the People have the Spirit to ſhew themſelves, they never ſhew themſelves in vain.

It is always hazardous to riſk ones Credit upon future Events; but if temperate and ſimple Plans of Aſſociations are adopted, and thoſe Plans adhered to with Steadineſs in the ſeveral petitioning Counties and Cities, I think it next to impoſſible, that we ſhould not be able to rid ourſelves of that overbearing Influence of the Crown, which is in Effect the Cauſe of all the Grievances we lament. The Effects already produced by our Exertions, are almoſt incredible, when we conſider how viſionary any Man would have been eſteemed ſix Months ago, who had hoped to aboliſh, by a Vote of Parliament, any of the Places dependent upon the Civil Liſt; but

we

we muſt not forget, that the little we have carried, has been carried againſt every Effort of the Miniſters, who have ſtill the Power of the Country in their Hands, ſo that all Hopes of future Succeſs muſt depend ſolely upon the Exertions of the People. Nothing can be more apparent, than that the Servants of the Crown are united in a Determination to reſiſt all the Objects you have moſt at Heart —where they fail in Strength, they have Recourſe to Stratagem; but neither Violence nor Stratagem can defeat the Wiſhes of the People of England, if they will but perſevere in firm and temperate Meaſures for obtaining them.

I have the Honor to be,

SIR,

Your moſt obedient Servant,

C. J. FOX.

To John Awdry, Eſq. Chairman of the Wiltſhire Committee.

RESOLVED unanimouſly, that the Thanks of this Committee be given to the Honorable Charles James Fox, for his very polite Letter to the Chairman of the 25th Inſtant.

At this Meeting the following Letter from the Secretary of the Nottinghamſhire Committee to the Chairman, was produced and read, and ordered to be entered among the Proceedings.

To JOHN AWDRY, Eſq.

Newark, Nottinghamſhire, March 13, 1780.

SIR,

PURSUANT to a Reſolution for carrying into Effect the Petition of this County, I have the Honor of incloſing to you a Copy of the Proceedings at the General Meeting at Mansfield, and of the Reſolutions of the Committee then appointed, who deſire to be favored with a Copy of ſuch of your Proceedings as you think proper to communicate to a Committee co-operating with you in all legal and conſtitutional Meaſures for correcting all Abuſes in the Expenditure of public Money, and for ſecuring Parliament from any unconſtitutional Influence on the Part of the Miniſters of the Crown.

I have the Honor to be,

SIR,

Your moſt humble Servant,

PHIL. TALLENTS,

Secretary to the Committee.

RESOLVED unanimouſly, that it is the Opinion of this Committee, that towards forming a Plan of an Aſſociation according to the original Appointment of this Committee, the County be moved To-morrow,—That if this Committee ſhall hereafter think it adviſeable to ſend any of their Members to meet Gentlemen ſent from other Counties, that the Perſons ſo ſent be reſtrained to promoting the Prayer of the Petition —Public Œconomy.

RESOLVED unanimouſly, that the Chairman of this Committee do make the ſaid Motion.

RESOLVED unanimouſly, that the Chairman do likewiſe acquaint the County Meeting, that many Subjects materially connected with the Prayer of the Petition are now depending in the Houſe of Commons.

RESOLVED unanimouſly, that the County be alſo moved To-morrow, that the General Meeting of this County be adjourned, *ſine die*, ſubject to the Call of the Chairman of this Committee, with the Conſent of a Quorum of the Committee.

It appearing to this Committee, that the Accident which has lately happened to Lord Shelburne,

was in Conſequence of his upright and ſpirited Conduct in Parliament:—RESOLVED unanimouſly, that this Committee do preſent their Congratulations to his Lordſhip on the Proſpect of his ſpeedy Recovery.

The Chairman of this Committee produced the following Letter, which he had juſt now received from the Right Honorable the Earl of Shelburne, which being read, is ordered to be entered among the Proceedings of this Committee.

Berkley-Square, March 26, 1780.

SIR,

I AM very much mortified, that it is not in my Power to perform a Duty, I feel ſo very agreeable and honorable, as that of attending the Committee of Correſpondence and Aſſociation, at Devizes, on Monday next, and the Meeting of the County, which is to be held the ſubſequent Day.

The early Negative put upon the Enquiry into the public Expenditure in the Houſe of Lords; the Refuſal of any Account of Places and Penſions held by Members of that Houſe; the Violence done to the Conſtitution by the arbitrary Removal of the Earl of Pembroke from the Lord Lieutenancy of our County (an Office which his Anceſtors have ſo

long

long and ſo honorably held, I believe, from its firſt Inſtitution) for no other poſſible Cauſe, but for having voted as a free Man upon a public Queſtion; as well as by that of the Marquis of Carmarthen from the Lord Lieutenancy of the Eaſt Riding of Yorkſhire.

And in the Houſe of Commons, the proceeding to lay new Burthens, without taking *any*, much leſs *effectual* œconomical Meaſures, in direct Oppoſition to the Prayer of our Petition, as well as thoſe of other Counties; the Number of Taxes propoſed to be ſuperadded; ſome bearing very hard upon our County in particular; namely, that which regards the private Brewery, beſides the Addition made to the ſevereſt of all Duties, that on Salt; when it is certain that triple the Sum might have been, and may ſtill be produced from the Suppreſſion of unneceſſary Offices, Savings in the Mode of Expenditure, and other œconomical Reforms, which require only Integrity to accompliſh; the Difficulties which have been thrown in the Way of a very able Plan of Reform now before the Houſe;—no Enquiry made into exorbitant Contracts;—Accomptants ſuffered to remain with large public Ballances at their own Diſpoſal;—the Meaſure for a Commiſſion of Accounts taken out of independent and diſintereſted Hands, and aſſumed by the Authors of our Diſtreſs,

in ſuch a Manner, as to mock every Idea of Parliamentary Independency, or popular Enquiry;—no Expectation offered by the Miniſter, except a poſſible reverſionary Reduction of thoſe Places which do not contribute to the Influence of the Crown, in Anſwer to the Petitions, deſiring an Abolition of thoſe that do;—and, withal, a Poſition laid down as fundamental, by the Supporters of the Court and Miniſters in both Houſes, that the Influence of the Crown is not dangerous to the Conſtitution, and is not encreaſed, in Contradiction to the Evidence of all our Senſes.

Theſe Facts, I apprehend, can leave little Doubt with any Freeholder, who approved of the former Meeting, of the Neceſſity of immediately aſſociating for the Accompliſhment of thoſe indiſpenſable Objects, ſtated in our Petition, in as ſtrong Terms as conſtitutional Language can dictate.

But I am ſenſible, that it muſt occur to our County, as it has already done to others, to conſider what Steps can be taken to obtain that Reform of which our preſent Parliament gives ſo little Hope, acting even under all its preſent Circumſtances, or what Security can be had for preſerving in future what we may have the good Fortune to obtain in this Moment of Exigence. It gives me great Satisfaction

faction to find, that it has occurred to none to have Recourſe to other Means than thoſe purely civil as well as ſtrictly conſtitutional.—Though no one feels with more Concern the Abuſes which have taken place in the Militia, and particularly the Departure from the ancient, true, fundamental, and, till of late Years, invariable Militia Principle of keeping them within their Counties, except in Caſe of actual Invaſion (their preſent diſtant and unneceſſary Removals, ſerving only to aſſimilate them to the ſtanding Army, in Principle and in Habits, not in Diſcipline) I ſtill have that Confidence in our Army as well as Militia, as at preſent conſtituted, that I hope neither are yet ſo eſtranged from a Love of the Conſtitution, as to give any juſt Apprehenſion of Danger.

Two Meaſures have offered themſelves for Conſideration, which, inaſmuch as they affect the Houſe of Commons merely, come unqueſtionably within the Province of our County Meeting, and cannot by any Miſrepreſentation be conſtrued to ariſe from improper Motives:—The one is to ſhorten the Duration of Parliaments; the other, to equalize the Repreſentation, which at preſent confeſſedly bears no Proportion, either to the Number of People, the Quantum of Property, or the Proportion of public Contribution; nor does it hold to any Rank or De-

ſcription whatever; but is the mere Child of Accident or Intrigue.

The People of England, I conceive, have, and always had, a clear, unalienable, indefeaſible Right, both to the one and the other, in their fulleſt Extent, upon a ſtronger Ground than that of any Act or Acts of Parliament. That "the Houſe of Commons muſt be free in every Circumſtance of its Conſtitution," is the Foundation Stone of all our Government. The ſame Right which the People had formerly, and, through the Bleſſing of God, exerted ſo happily for us, their Poſterity, to have Parliaments frequently *holden*, when they were aggrieved by the Crown's with-holding them, now goes to have them *frequently* and *equally choſen*, when it appears, through the Length of the Duration, and the Inequality of the Repreſentation, that they are ſtill more aggrieved than they were formerly, by the total Want of them—And if this ſhould appear to be the Senſe of a fair Majority of the People, collected together, either in County-Meetings or in any other conſtitutional Mode, there can be no Doubt, but that proper Laws will be immediately enacted to reſtore the Conſtitution to its firſt Principles in theſe Particulars: For it is not to be preſumed, that the preſent defective Repreſentation would venture to oppoſe

poſe the manifeſt Senſe of thoſe from whom they derive all their Authority; much leſs that the Houſe of Lords, conſtituted as it is, or the Crown, could be ſo ill-adviſed, as to deny their Concurrence and Aſſent to ſo ſalutary a Reform, in a Part of the Conſtitution, which more particularly belongs to the Democracy.—Theſe Principles are ſo unalterably engraven in my Mind, that I ſhould hold myſelf criminal in the Suppreſſion of them when called for. It will be for the County to judge, whether they will proceed to declaratory Reſolutions on the Subject of them, and then wait till the Senſe of the reſt of the Kingdom is ſo far known; or whether they will be contented finally, without puſhing the Right of the People to its utmoſt Extent, by inſiſting upon an annual Election, and a total Change of the Repreſentation. There are Men, of whoſe Integrity there is but one Voice, and whoſe Judgment deſerves every Attention throughout England, who foreſee more Inconvenience than I confeſs I do in the *whole* Extent of theſe Propoſitions. Beſides, the Conſequences of great Changes have been, in all Times, ſo uncertain, that it may be moſt prudent to avoid them; eſpecially as, in the preſent Inſtance, I am free to own, that, ſo far as I am capable of judging, every End may be obtained by the Repeal of the ſeptennial Act, and a reaſonable Addition of

County

County Members, choſen by Diſtricts, or under ſome Regulation, which might preclude all Neceſſity of Expence. But I ſhall moſt willingly ſubſcribe to the Diſcretion and Wiſdom of the Meeting in this and every other Conſideration of Expediency, and I dare rely upon the Generoſity and Candor of the County and Committee, that they will put a juſt Interpretation upon the Liberty I take, meaning to aſſume no more than what might become any other Freeholder; ſubmitting my unreſerved Sentiments, in Time of Diſtreſs, to their better Judgment, as I cannot have the Honor of attending in Perſon, when I might explain myſelf more particularly upon each Part, as Occaſion might require.—I have nothing ſo much at Heart as to prove the Sincerity and Conſiſtency of my Conduct upon all Occaſions, but moſt of all in the County of my Reſidence, and among a Neighbourhood whoſe good Opinion muſt in the End make the Comfort and Honor of my Life.

I have the Honor to be, with great Reſpect and Conſideration,

SIR,

Your moſt obedient,

and humble Servant,

SHELBURNE.

To John Awdry, Eſq. Chairman of the Wiltſhire Committee.

RESOLVED unanimouſly, that the Thanks of this Committee be given to the Right Honorable the Earl of Shelburne, for the very full and candid Sentiments expreſſed in his Letter to the Chairman of the 26th Inſtant.

RESOLVED, That the Chairman of this Committee do report to the General Meeting Tomorrow the Whole of the Proceedings of this Committee, omitting only ſuch Letters as are therein inſerted, but ſuch or any of ſuch Letters to be read at the Requeſt of any Perſon preſent.

RESOLVED unanimouſly, that the Chairman be alſo requeſted to move at the Meeting Tomorrow, that this Committee be continued with the ſame Powers as before.

RESOLVED unanimouſly, that Mr. Awdry, Mr. Humphrys, Mr. Sutton, Mr. Cam, Mr. Gibbs, Mr. Yerbury, or any Two of them, be a Committee to audit the Accounts of this Committee.

J. AWDRY, Chairman.

DEVIZES, 28th *March*, 1780.

AT a Meeting of the Gentlemen, Clergy, and Freeholders of the County of Wilts, held this Day at the Town Hall in Devizes, purſuant to an Adjournment for that Purpoſe from the laſt General Meeting;

ROBERT COOPER, Eſq. in the Chair.

RESOLVED unanimouſly, that the Committee appointed at the laſt General Meeting, be continued with the like Powers as before, and that the following Gentlemen be added to the Committee:

The Hon. Bartholomew Bouverie.
The Rev. Mr. Canon Bowles.
Robert John Buxton, Eſq.
Humphry Sturt, Eſq.
William Aldridge Ballard, Eſq.

RESOLVED unanimouſly, that if the Committee ſhall hereafter think it adviſeable to ſend any of their Members to meet Gentlemen ſent from other Counties, that the Perſons ſo ſent be reſtrained to promoting the Prayer of the Petition,

tition,—Public Œconomy. And that no Members of the Committee be ſo appointed, but at a Meeting to be holden for the ſpecial Purpoſe of ſuch Appointment, on the Notice by circular Letter of ten Days at the leaſt; and unleſs ſuch Appointment be made with the Conſent of the Majority of Twenty-one at leaſt aſſembled at the ſaid Committee.

RESOLVED unanimouſly, that the Thanks of this County be expreſſed to the Right Hon. the Earl of Pembroke, for his upright Conduct in the Houſe of Peers in Support of the favorite Object of this County Petition,—An Enquiry into the Expenditure of Money out of the Civil Liſt; and a Concern that his Lordſhip appears to have been removed on that Account from the Lieutenancy of this County.

It appearing to this Meeting, that the Accident which has lately happened to Lord Shelburne was in Conſequence of his upright and ſpirited Conduct in Parliament;—RESOLVED, That this Meeting do preſent their Congratulations to his Lordſhip on the Proſpect of his ſpeedy Recovery.

RE-

RESOLVED unanimouſly, that the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the two Repreſentatives for this County for their upright Conduct in Parliament.

RESOLVED unanimouſly, that the Proceedings of this Meeting be tranſmitted to the ſeveral Committees who have honored the Committee for this County with their Correſpondence.

RESOLVED unanimouſly, that the whole Proceedings of the public Meetings and Committee of this County be forthwith publiſhed.

RESOLVED unanimouſly, that the General Meeting of this County be adjourned, *ſine die*, ſubject to the Call of the Chairman of the Committee, with the Conſent of a Quorum.

ROBERT COOPER, Chairman.

FINIS.